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St. Marnock's N.S. Remote Learning Policy:

Introduction:

The purpose of this plan is to outline how our school will maintain, develop and promote the link between home and school in response to this time of uncertainty regarding school closures.

In accordance with Circular 74/2020 we have put in place appropriate contingency measures through a communication and learning platform to ensure that we are prepared to continue to support teaching and learning in the event of a partial or full closure of schools arising from Public Health advice. We aim to continue to communicate with our pupils by means of these platforms which are outlined in this policy.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Acceptable Use Policy as an important addition to learning from a digital learning platform. It should also be read taking into account our school's Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying (including Cyber Bullying) and Mobile Phone policies. It is very important that all stakeholders are aware that once a learning exchange takes place between a pupil and a teacher, whether at home or school, the same statutory rules apply i.e. the school's Code of Behaviour and all of the school's policies apply.

Aims:

We recognise that online safety is of immense importance and the aim of this document is to help to protect both school staff and pupils, while teaching and learning online. Remote learning necessitates online collaboration between school and home and is essential for maintaining the connection between staff and pupils. St. Marnock's National School uses a variety of child friendly, online tools to assist in providing more effective teaching and learning, while also enabling greater communication between staff, families and pupils.

This policy seeks to ensure that remote learning is safe for all student learners and that personal and sensitive data is also protected under GDPR legislation. Schools must ensure that learning takes place in an environment that is respectful and fair and meets its statutory duties.

This Policy has been formulated taking into account GDPR and the relevant sections of the Data Protection Act (2018) and the following Department of Education & Skills (DES) documents:

- Circular 0074/2020: Communication/Teaching and Learning platform
- DES Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2017)
- DES Guidance on Continuity of Schooling for Primary Schools (May 2020)
- DES Guidance on Continuity of Schooling: *Supporting Primary Pupils at very High Risk to Covid 19* (August 2020)
- DES Guidance on Remote Learning in a COVID-19 Context: For Primary and Special Schools September – December 2020
- DES Updated Guidance on Continuity of Schooling: Supporting pupils at risk of Educational Disadvantage
- DES Updated Guidance on Continuity of Schooling: Supporting pupils with Special Educational Needs - For Mainstream primary and special schools

Guidelines for good online communication in St. Marnock's NS:

(i) Guidelines for Parents/Guardians:

1. St. Marnock's National School recognises that online collaboration is essential for remote learning and may provide access to a variety of online tools that allow communication, sharing, and messaging among staff, students and parents.
2. Students are expected to uphold the same appropriate, safe and courteous conduct online as is expected offline.
3. **Recording (audio, video or photographs) of a teleconferencing call e.g. Webex/Zoom, is strictly forbidden.**
4. Students will only have access to chat rooms, discussion forums, messaging or other electronic communication that have been approved by the school and sanctioned by the class teacher, for example Seesaw and Webex.
5. These services, although not owned by St. Marnock's National School, form part of our web services and all content that is placed on these services falls under this policy.
6. All electronic forms of communication will only be used for educational purposes.
7. **When using these communication forums, parental permission for the child is implied, as the links for lessons and other access details are being communicated through parents. Essentially, by virtue of the children logging in to the resource, permission is assumed.**
8. It is the duty of the Parents to supervise their own children.
9. St. Marnock's N.S. cannot accept responsibility for the security of such online platforms in the event they are hacked.
10. Each teacher has been issued with a dedicated email address which they can use to contact parents. Teachers of children in Junior Infants – 2nd class use Dojo as a means of electronic communication with parents and teachers of children in 3rd – 6th class may be contacted by means of their school email address.
11. All communication with staff members via Dojo/Email must be from parents, not children.
12. For face to face communication (video conferencing) the contact with pupils will be set up using the staff member's email and the parent's email, which can be obtained from Databiz or Seesaw.
13. **The link/other access details to each Webex meeting should never be shared with others outside the class.**

14. If a teacher witnesses/ overhears a child protection issue while on a Webex call he/she is mandated to report the matter to Tusla

(ii) Guidelines for pupils using Webex Video calls:

Preparation for the video call:

- An adult should be present for the duration of the call; they don't need to be on screen but they should be in the room
- Dress appropriately, not pyjamas etc.
- Secondary devices e.g. mobile phones, tablets, must be kept in another room.
- Devices should be set up in the following way: (1) in a quiet place (2) with a plain background

During the video call:

- Join the class with your microphone muted
- Raise your hand before speaking, just like you would in class
- Kind words must be spoken at all times
- Speak clearly, in your normal speaking voice, no need to speak loudly
- Listen to and show respect for others when they are speaking

It is important to note that any breach of the above guidelines (on pages 2 and 3) will result in a discontinuation of this method of communication. A breach may also result in a person being immediately removed from a meeting or a meeting being immediately terminated.

(iii) Guidelines for Staff Members using Webex Video calls:

- The teacher's email address only will be used when setting up the Webex account for class video conferencing
- For Data Protection purposes, staff will ensure that parents' email addresses are not shared
- Staff will follow the school guidelines on *How to Schedule Webex Meetings*, which outlines specific settings which will be used with video calls
- Teachers will only admit participants from the waiting room whose usernames they are familiar with
- From the outset teachers will provide clear ground rules regarding the children's participation in the meeting e.g. use of hands up, muting etc. Parents and children will receive guidelines for the use of Webex prior to the roll out of these video calls. **Parental permission for the child is implied, as the links/other access details for lessons are being communicated through parents. Essentially, by virtue of the children logging in to the resource, permission is assumed.** (See point 7 on pg 2 under Webex Parental Guidelines)
- If a staff member feels uncomfortable at any stage, they may end the call immediately and report concerns to management
- Prior to the meeting, all participants will be muted on entry
- Staff members will never share the Webex link publicly
- Screen sharing must always be set to "host only"
- Staff members must turn off annotation feature
- Block 'Private chats' at all times
- Turn off file transfers
- It is recommended that a second adult (Special Needs Assistant/SEN teacher) is present for the video call.

- Communication using a personal mobile phone will not be frequent, but in the rare circumstances where it is necessary, staff members will ensure that their caller ID is set to private

Communication and teaching and learning platforms our school will use:

St. Marnock's N.S. will use the following online platforms for communicating and connecting with families and pupils. Our Remote Learning Plan will include a combination of assigned curricular work and pre-recorded tutorials via *Seesaw* and weekly 'Well-being check-ins' via *Webex* video conferencing.

DATABIZ:

The school will communicate regularly with the general parent body by email/text using Databiz software which has access to parents' email addresses/phone numbers which have been provided by them to the school upon enrolment of their child.

DOJO/EMAIL:

Parents may contact their child's class teacher via **DOJO** if their child is in Junior Infants – 2nd class **OR** by **EMAIL** if their child is in 3rd – 6th class/Speech and Language class.

Each teacher has a professional email address through which he/she will communicate with parents/guardians and vice-versa. Parental queries will be addressed during school hours only and should relate strictly to their child's teaching and learning.

SEESAW:

Seesaw Class App is for our pupils to connect to their folder and they then have the option of uploading items to their folder for their teacher to see and provide feedback. This app is used throughout the school from Junior Infants – Sixth Class and all pupils have been set up using a text code/QR code following completion of individual consent forms from parents. In the event of a school closure lessons will be pre-recorded in the core subjects and uploaded via Seesaw. Assigned work for pupils will also be uploaded in other subject areas on a daily basis.

Teachers' Collaborative Planning for Seesaw: Teachers collaborate and plan together at each year level. They will hold online meetings to organise, plan together and share a weekly plan of work with supporting resources with pupils who will be able to view the assigned work through logging into Seesaw on a daily basis.

Special Education Needs (SEN) teachers provide customised support to pupils based on their Individual Educational Plan (IEP). This may include pre-recorded lessons, phone calls/video calls to parents, individual Webex Check-in sessions and differentiated assigned work. Our Speech and Language class will also be supported using a similar approach including Skype calls tailored to meet their individual needs. The Speech and Language Therapist will also provide online speech and language support in the event of a school closure.

WEBEX VIDEO CONFERENCING:

Webex is a video-conferencing platform which will enable teachers, staff and pupils to connect via a live link. Teachers will connect with pupils weekly using pre-arranged Webex Meetings. They will not be live teaching lessons but will be scheduled to allow teachers and pupils the opportunity to connect. Webex check-in sessions will be timetabled across year levels to allow for siblings using a shared device to login to their class meeting.

SCHOOL WEBSITE:

Our new school website www.stmarnocksns.ie has been recently launched in October 2020 and is a valuable tool to keep our school community informed of news and developments in our school. It also provides an insight into important everyday events taking place in our school.

Remote Teaching and Learning Protocols for pupils:

- Check assigned work on a daily basis if possible
- Communication with teachers should only take place during normal school hours
- The normal school calendar will apply
- The following school policies apply to remote teaching and learning: (1) Code of Behaviour (2) Anti-Bullying Policy (3) Acceptable Use Policy
- Teaching and Learning best practice will continue to apply, with pupils expected to complete the assigned work to the best of their ability where possible while taking account of each family's own unique circumstances in this evolving and unprecedented situation
- In so far as possible, customised provision for students with SEN will be made when using Remote Learning methodologies including additional check-ins and differentiated work planned by the SEN teacher in collaboration with the class teacher
- In so far as possible, provision for student at very high-risk to Covid 19 will be made when using Remote Learning methodologies.

Remote Teaching and Learning Protocols for parents/guardians:

- We ask parents/guardians to ensure the above protocols for their children's learning are adhered to.
- Check-in on their child's schoolwork on a daily basis where possible and talk to their child about the work being assigned.
- Keep in contact with your child's teacher and respond to any messages sent to you.
- The health and wellbeing of all is paramount. Circumstances may change for any of us unexpectedly, teachers or parents, so please keep your child's school work in perspective and do not allow anything school related to negatively affect your child.
- Please encourage your child to engage with his/her teacher and to submit work as regularly as possible for comment. However, we can't emphasise strongly enough that there's no pressure on any parent to complete everything with their children. This work is suggested work and you as parents can decide how much or how little you do each day with the main deciding factor that it should not make family life more stressful
- Every family's circumstances are different and your child is an individual being guided by the person, who knows and loves them the most, you the parent. Teachers will encourage pupils to complete some school work every weekday for routine and they will do their best to provide feedback, guidance and support. We request that parents and pupils do their best too and that is all.

Remote Teaching and Learning Protocols for Teachers/SNAs:

- Teachers have overall control of the online interaction of their class or group and provide work on a daily basis.
- Teachers will check uploaded work on Seesaw on a daily basis and provide feedback accordingly.

- Teachers will be available to respond to any queries from parents via *Dojo* (Junior Infants – 2nd class) or via *email* (2nd – 6th class) or *Seesaw* during normal school hours.
- The normal school calendar will apply.
- The following school policies apply to remote teaching and learning: (1) Child Protection Policy (2) Data Protection Policy
- Teaching and Learning best practice will continue to apply with students expected to upload work on a regular basis to the best of their ability where possible.
- SNAs may participate in *Webex* ‘check-ins’ via phone or video call with their pupils. These calls will be pre-arranged with parents.

Remote Teaching and Learning Provision specifically for the following Covid-19 related scenarios:

Provision for children who are at very high risk to Covid 19: Our school will engage directly with relevant parents, regarding remote educational provision for children who are deemed to be at very high risk to Covid-19 (see HSE Guidelines) where medical certification has been provided to the school.

Provision for all other children who are instructed to self-isolate by their GP or HSE Public Health, educational provision will be provided as follows:

1. **Children who are awaiting Covid 19 test results for themselves or a family member and have been instructed by their GP to isolate at home for a few days:** These pupils will be supported to catch up on their learning on their return to school.
2. **Children isolating at home on instruction from their GP due to a confirmed case within their own family/close contact outside of school (14-day isolation period):** Teacher will link in with the pupil via Seesaw.
3. **School POD (group of six) instructed by HSE Public Health to self-isolate:** Teacher will link in with the pupils via Seesaw.
4. **School bubble (whole class) instructed by HSE Public Health to self-isolate (14day isolation period):** Teacher will engage with the bubble daily on Seesaw and weekly via Webex.
5. **Whole school closure as instructed by HSE Public Health (duration of closure will be advised by Public Health):** Teachers will engage with pupils, using a blended approach of pre-recorded lessons, Seesaw and weekly contact via Webex.

Please note that the current situation is ever evolving and these circumstances may vary throughout the school year.

SUMMARISED ADVICE FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS:

- Please follow the parental protocols set out in this policy in order that teachers can work collaboratively with you to support your children with their remote learning. Encourage your child to complete their assigned work to the best of their ability but we reiterate that

you should not feel pressurised to get your child to complete every task every day but simply guide them to complete what they can within your own family circumstances.

- There will be no schoolwork assigned during planned school closures/holidays and there will be no interaction via *Seesaw* or *Webex* during these times.
- Please check your emails for communication from the school and monitor our school website www.stmarnocksns.ie as these are our main platforms of communication with you going forward.
- If you have any queries regarding your child's learning, please email your child's class teacher directly or email the school office @stmarnocksns@gmail.com for more general queries

Date Ratified by the Board of Management: 28th January 2021

Signed: Ciarán McCormack

Chairperson of the Board of Management